

## EDITORIALS

### WHO IS VIOLATING THE MEDICAL PRACTICE ACT?

*Section 17 of the Medical Practice Act provides a penalty for treating, diagnosing or prescribing for any ailment of the human system without having a license issued under the laws of this state.*

It is a matter of common belief that some medical officers of the state, county and municipal governments, and technicians of a variety of species, are constantly violating this law.

### DETAILING THE DOCTOR BY MAIL

The doctor's mail is beginning to look like the advertising sheets of some of our "careless" newspapers and magazines. Some of the publicity is well written, informative, and from legitimate firms who advertise in good medical journals. But fully 95 per cent of it is the worst form of medical piffle. Much of it is not even cleverly done, and lots of it frankly appeals to the physician's cupidity at the expense of his honor.

Doctor, did you ever stop to think what an insult to your intelligence and how cheaply many of these advertisers regard your integrity, as expressed in the expensive "stuff" they load your mail with? They further show how cheaply they expect to buy you, by trying to buy space in your medical journal and when they are turned down, they resort directly to your mail.

Do you know that some of these people grade their "literature" into three classes? One kind goes to doctors who are members of their medical societies; another grade goes to those doctors who are not members and to the various groups of cultists. The final grade is for public consumption.

Some of our members supply their state officers and CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE with all their mail of questionable character in original wrappers. We wish more physicians would do so. Original wrappers are necessary for the postoffice people with that class of rot covered by postal laws.

We also have facilities for getting some of the class sent to nurses, clinics and the public, but we want more from different localities. These fakirs often send one class of mail to one locality and another class to some other county.

The reasons for all these customs are, of course, obvious. We have no hope of destroying these pernicious influences, but it is quite a pleasure to help keep them on the move.

### PAY CLINICS

Doctor, if you are interested in the greatest problem of our profession, which consists in making the best that scientific medicine has to offer available to everyone at the lowest possible cost consistent with good service, read the abstract of the discussions about "pay clinics" published on page 15 of this issue.

The July, 1923, number of Hospital Social Service is practically all devoted to the subject. There

are several good articles dealing with its various phases. We have taken abstracts from some of the papers and reduced the matter for your convenience.

The pay-clinicians are a very busy lot of people. A few of them are educated practicing physicians, but most of them are non-medical with a sprinkling of "swivel-chair" men of our profession who have long since gotten out of touch and out of step with medicine as a great altruistic human service to sick people. To some of them medicine, whether preventive or curative, is now a cold-blooded game based upon "statistics" and other actuarial figures, with human beings as pawns. We must not lose sight of the fact that the 150,000 physicians of the country are themselves part of the public, and whatever steps and movements are made to limit or treat disease should not imply the complete pauperization of physicians. They have the same human desires and requirements as other citizens and are entitled to the same consideration given to others. Destructionists may criticize them all they please, but the fact remains that they are the best we have. They are the chief agents of civilization in controlling disease, relieving suffering and extending intelligent sympathy to those most in need of it.

Following promptly upon the introduction of pay clinics, we have the movement to change many former "free clinics" to "pay clinics," and this movement already has traveled far. What do you want done about it, and who shall do it?

### DO YOU WANT THAT TWO-DOLLAR TAX ABOLISHED?

Many of our members are urging that the League for the Conservation of Public Health be asked to promote legislation to abolish the two-dollar-a-year Board of Medical Examiners' tax. A bill to this effect is now in course of preparation, which will be submitted to medical organizations and, as endorsed, will be introduced at the next Legislature.

We have yet to meet the first physician who is not opposed to this tax; most of them even decidedly resentfully opposed to it. This is not because of the amount of the tax, which is small, nor so much the nuisance connected with its payment. The objections are those of principle. It is probably the best, or the worst, example of class legislation to be found anywhere and, of course, is therefore unfair, unjust and repugnant to honest men.

In the enforcement of the Medical Practice Act by the Board of Medical Examiners, for which the two-dollar tax was supposed to supply funds, physicians are placed in the anomalous position of paying a special tax for the support of laws which, in some instances, are injurious to the only group of people who pay the tax. Some of the money collected by that exclusive, select and special class tax was, and presumably still is, used to pay a committee of doctors to prosecute violators of the medical practice laws. It is generally and correctly believed by both physicians and the general public that the prosecution of quacks, fakers, and the general unlicensed mess of so-called "doctors" by a board of doctors causes great injury to the good name of the medical profession. In spite of this well-known fact, physicians, and physicians only, are specially taxed